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**METHOD FOR PROVIDING A DECORATIVE COVER
FOR A FLORAL GROUPING**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of copending U.S. Serial No.10/316,469, filed December 10, 2002; which is a continuation of U.S. Serial No. 09/899,592, filed July 5, 2001, now U.S. Patent No. 6,499,251, the contents of which is hereby expressly incorporated herein in its entirety by reference.

**STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED
RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT**

[0002] Not applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to a decorative cover for a floral grouping, and more particularly but not by way of limitation, to a decorative cover for a floral grouping and to a method for producing such decorative cover wherein the decorative cover includes design indicia to personalize or enhance

the visual aesthetic effect of the decorative cover and a card holder assembly for securing a card to the decorative cover.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present invention relates generally to a decorative cover for a floral grouping wherein the decorative cover has design indicia for enhancing the visual effect of the decorative cover and a card holder assembly for securing a card to the decorative cover. In one aspect, the decorative cover has an indicia bearing portion which extends a distance above the remainder of the decorative cover so as to enhance the visual aesthetic effect of decorative cover and a card holder assembly for securing a card to the decorative cover. In yet another aspect, the present invention relates to a method for producing a decorative cover for a floral grouping wherein the decorative cover is provided with a design indicia and a card holder assembly wherein the method for producing the decorative cover includes the steps of: (a) providing a sheet of material having a design indicia bearing portion, a card holder assembly and an opening in the sheet of material adapted to receive a lower portion of a stem end of a floral grouping, the opening being offset from a central portion of the sheet of material in a direction generally away from the indicia bearing portion of the sheet of material; (b) disposing a lower portion of a stem end of a floral grouping in the opening in the sheet of material; and (c) forming the sheet of

material into a decorative cover about the floral grouping such that the indicia bearing portion of the decorative cover extends above the remainder of the decorative cover and thereby enhances the visual aesthetic effect of decorative cover and (d) securing a card to the card holder assembly.

[0005] An object of the present invention is to provide a decorative cover for a floral grouping wherein the decorative cover is provided with an indicia bearing portion for enhancing the visual aesthetic effect of the decorative cover and card holder assembly for securing a card to the decorative cover.

[0006] Another object of the present invention, while achieving the before stated object, is to provide a method of producing a decorative cover for a floral grouping wherein the decorative cover is provided with an indicia bearing portion for enhancing the visual aesthetic effect of the decorative cover and a card holder assembly for securing a card to the decorative cover.

[0007] Other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING

[0008] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a decorative cover formed about a floral grouping in accordance with the present invention, the decorative cover having an indicia bearing portion which enhances the visual aesthetic effect of the decorative cover and a card holder assembly for securing a card to the decorative cover.

[0009] FIG. 2 is a top plan view of a sheet of material having a substantially square-shaped configuration used in the construction of the decorative cover of FIG. 1, the sheet of material having a portion upturned to show a lower side of the sheet of material and the sheet of material having a design indicia bearing portion, a card holder assembly and an opening adapted to receive a lower portion of a stem end of a floral grouping, the opening being offset from a central portion of the sheet of material in a direction generally away from the indicia bearing portion of the sheet of material.

[0010] FIG. 3 is a side elevational view, partially in cross section, of a floral grouping having a lower portion of a stem end thereof inserted through an opening in a sheet of material.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Definitions

[0011] The term "floral grouping" as used herein refers to a single flower, foliage, botanical item, propagule, cut flowers, artificial flowers, and/or other fresh and/or artificial plants or floral materials, including secondary plants and/or other ornamentation which adds to the aesthetic qualities of the overall floral grouping.

[0012] The term "bonding material" as used herein refers to any adhesive or cohesive including pressure sensitive adhesives and co-adhesives. The term "bonding material" as used herein also refers to materials which are heat sealable, sonic sealable, and/or vibratory sealable. For example, the term "bonding material" can refer to a heat sealing lacquer which may be applied to a sheet of material and effectively bonded thereto by heat, sound waves, or vibrations.

[0013] The term "bonding material" as used herein also refers to any type of material or device which can be used to effect the bonding or connecting of two adjacent portions of a sheet of material to effect the connection or bonding described herein. Thus, the term "bonding material" can refer to ties, labels, elastomeric bands, ribbons, strings, tape, staples, and combinations thereof.

[0014] The term "bonding material" as used herein also refers to any heat or chemically shrinkable material, electrical bonding means such as static

electricity, magnetic bonding means, mechanical or barb-type fastening means, clamping means, curl-type characteristics of a film means, materials incorporated into the sheet of material which can cause the sheet of material to take on certain shapes, and any type of welding methods which may weld portions of the sheet to itself and/or other sheets.

[0015] The term "polymeric film" as used herein refers to a film formed of synthetic polymers, such as polypropylene, or naturally occurring polymers, such as cellophane, which are relatively strong and not subject to tearing (substantially non-tearable). Various types of "polymeric films" are described in U.S. Patent No. 5,311,991, issued to Weder et al. on May 17, 1994, which is expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0016] The term "cling wrap" as used herein refers to any material which is capable of connecting to itself when wrapped about an item, such as a floral grouping. The term "cling wrap" is defined in detail in U.S. Patent No. 5,311,991 issued to Weder et al. on May 17, 1994, which is expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0017] The term "design indicia" as used herein refers to fanciful designs such as hearts, balloons, pumpkins, clover, eggs, tombstones, flowers (such as roses, daisies, lilacs and the like), plants (such as fruits, vegetables, clover, grasses, trees and the like), mammals (such as rabbits, dogs, cats and the like), fictional characters (such as cartoon characters), non-mammals (such as

chicks, birds, alligators and the like), or real characters (such as a photograph of an individual), and the like.

[0018] Design indicia as used herein also refers to printed information, including letters, numbers, words and/or slogans for special occasions (such as a birthday, an anniversary, a holiday such as valentine's day, Mother's day, Easter, Christmas and the like), as well as combinations of various fanciful designs and/or printed information.

DESCRIPTION OF VARIOUS EMBODIMENTS

[0019] Referring now to the drawings, and more particularly to FIG. 1, shown therein is a decorative cover 10 disposed about a floral grouping 12. The decorative cover 10 includes an indicia bearing portion 14 which extends above the remainder of the decorative cover 10 so as to enhance the visual aesthetic effect of the decorative cover 10, a card holder assembly 15 and a card 17. The decorative cover 10 is formed by wrapping at least one sheet of material 16 (FIGS. 2 and 3) about a stem end 18 of the floral grouping 12 such that a bloom end 19 of the floral grouping 12 is visible. A card 17 can be disposed in the card holder assembly 15 to personalize the decorative cover 10. The decorative cover 10 is secured about the floral grouping 12 via a suitable bonding material, such as an adhesive, a band, a ribbon and the like.

[0020] As more clearly shown in FIGS. 2 and 3, the sheet of material 16 has, in addition to the design indicia bearing portion 14 and the card holder assembly 15, an upper surface 20, a lower surface 22, and an opening 24 adapted to receive at least a lower portion 25 of the stem end 18 of the floral grouping 12. The opening 24 in the sheet of material 16 is offset from a central portion 26 of the sheet of material 16 in a direction 28 generally away from the indicia bearing portion 14 of the sheet of material 16.

[0021] The sheet of material 16, which has a substantially square-shaped configuration, is sized so that when the lower portion 25 of the stem end 18 of the floral grouping 12 is disposed through the opening 24 in the sheet of material 16 and the sheet of material 16 is wrapped or formed about the floral grouping 12, the decorative cover 10 so formed is provided with four petal-like portions 30, 32, 34 and 36, each of which terminates with a substantially pointed end formed by the four corners of the substantially square-shaped sheet of material 16. Three of the petal-like portions 30, 32 and 36 are flared so as to extend a distance upwardly and outwardly from the floral grouping 12, and the petal-like portion 34, which is formed of the design indicia bearing portion 14 of the sheet of material 16, extends in an upwardly direction from the floral grouping 12 substantially as shown and contains a design indicia 40 which enhances the visual aesthetic effect of the decorative cover 10.

[0022] A bonding material can be applied to at least a portion of the upper and/or lower surfaces 20 and 22 of the sheet of material 16 surrounding the opening 24 in the sheet of material 16, such as the adhesive or cohesive 42 applied to a portion of the upper surface 20 of the sheet of material 16.

[0023] The design indicia 40 may be produced on the sheet of material 16 by application of a dye, ink, and/or pigment to the sheet of material 16 such that, upon forming the sheet of material 16 about the floral grouping 12 to produce the decorative cover 10, the decorative cover 10 is provided with the design indicia bearing portion 14. Such dyes, inks, and/or pigments are known in the art and are commercially available, and may be applied to the sheet of material 16 by any method known in the art. In addition, the design indicia 40 may be a hologram and/or an outlined configuration, or a hologram and/or outlined configuration in combination with a printed portion, or an embossed pattern, a printed pattern, or an embossed and printed pattern wherein the embossed pattern and printed pattern may be either in register, out of register or wherein a portion of the embossed pattern is in register with a portion of the printed pattern and a portion of the embossed pattern is out of register with a portion of the printed pattern.

[0024] The card holder assembly 15 can be any assembly which enables the card 17 to be removably connected to the decorative cover 10 such that the connection and removal of the card 17 to and from the decorative cover 10

does not damage or destroy the aesthetic effect of the decorative cover 10. For example, but not by way of limitation, the card holder assembly 15 can be provided by forming a slit, or a plurality of slits, in the sheet of material 16 into which at least a portion of the card 17 is inserted into the card holder assembly 15 so that the card 17 is temporarily retained in the card holder assembly 15. The card holder assembly 15 could be provided by an area of bonding material disposed on the card 17 and/or the sheet of material 16 to bondingly but removably connect the card 17 to the sheet of material 16. The bonding material being of sufficient tackiness to connect the card 17 to the sheet of material 16 yet release the card 17 from the sheet of material 16 without damaging or destroying the decorative cover 10. The aforementioned areas of bonding material could further include release strips disposed over the areas of bonding material for protecting the adhesive or cohesive qualities of the areas of bonding material until needed. The card holder assembly 15 could be provided by a card receiving pocket formed in or on one of the upper or lower surfaces 20 and 22 of the sheet material 16 such that at least a portion of the card 17 can be inserted and removed from the card receiving pocket. The card holder assembly 15 could be provided by an area of hook and loop type material bonded to the card 17 and an area of hook and loop type material bonded to the sheet of material 16 which removably interlocks with the area of hook and loop type material on the card 17. The card holder assembly 15 could

be provided by an area of magnetic material on the card 17 which is magnetically attracted to an area of magnetically attractive material on the sheet of material 16. The card holder assembly 15 could be provided by attaching a second sheet to the sheet of material 16 so as to form a card retaining space between the sheet of material 16 and the second sheet of material, into which at least a portion of the card 17 can be inserted.

[0025] Referring more specifically to FIG. 3, the decorative cover 10 shown in FIG. 1 is formed about the floral grouping 12 by inserting the lower portion 25 of the stem end 18 of the floral grouping 12 through the opening 24 in the sheet of material 16 such that the lower portion 25 of the stem end 18 of the floral grouping 12 extends a distance below the lower surface 22 of the sheet of material 16. The sheet of material 16 is then wrapped about the floral grouping 12 while the lower portion 25 of the stem end 18 remains extended through the opening 24 substantially as shown. The sheet of material 16 can be wrapped about the floral grouping 12 such that the decorative cover 10 substantially encompasses the bloom end 19 of the floral grouping 12; or the sheet of material 16 can be wrapped about the floral grouping 12 so that the bloom end 19 of the floral grouping 12 extends upwardly beyond the accentuated flared petal-like portions 30, 32 and 36.

[0026] The sheet of material 16 is tightly wrapped about the stem end 18 of the floral grouping 12 and at least a portion of the overlapping portions of

the decorative cover 10 are bondingly connected by the adhesive or cohesive 42 applied to a portion of the upper surface 20 of the sheet of material 16 to secure the decorative cover 10 tightly about the stem end 18 of the floral grouping 12 and thereby substantially prevent the floral grouping 12 from sliding or moving within the decorative cover 10.

[0027] As previously stated, when the lower portion 25 of the stem end 18 of the floral grouping 12 is disposed through the opening 24 in the sheet of material 16 and the sheet of material 16 is wrapped about the floral grouping 12, the decorative cover 10 so formed is provided with the four petal-like portions 30, 32, 34 and 36, each of which terminates with a substantially pointed end formed by the four corners of the substantially square-shaped sheet of material 16. Three of the petal-like portion 30, 32 and 36 are flared and extend a distance upwardly and outwardly from the floral grouping 12, while the petal-like portion 34, which is formed of the design indicia bearing portion 14 of the sheet of material 16, extends in an upwardly direction from the floral grouping 12 substantially as shown and contains a design indicia 40 which enhances the visual aesthetic effect of the decorative cover 10. Thus, a portion of the decorative cover 10 is tightly wrapped about the stem end 18 of the floral grouping 12 while another portion of the decorative cover 10 is loosely formed about the bloom end 19 of the floral grouping 12.

[0028] The sheet of material 16 employed in the construction of the decorative cover 10 has a substantially planar cross-section and desirably a thickness in a range of from about 0.1 mil to about 30 mil, more desirably from about 1 mil to about 10 mil. However, it should be understood that the thickness of the sheet of material 16 may vary depending on the type of material from which the sheet of material 16 is constructed. That is, it should be understood that the sheet of material 16 can have any thickness so long as the sheet of material 16 retains sufficient flexibility and foldability so that the sheet of material 16 can be formed about the floral grouping 12 to provide the decorative cover 10 thereabout. For example, the sheet of material 16 can be constructed of paper, metal foil, polymeric film, cling wrap, cloth, burlap and/or combinations thereof.

[0029] A decorative pattern, such as a color and/or an embossed pattern and/or a hologram and/or other decorative surface ornamentation may be applied to the upper and/or lower surfaces 20 and 22 of the sheet of material 16 or portions thereof, including but not limited to, printed designs, embossed designs, coatings, colors, flocking or metallic finishes. Further, the sheet of material 16, with the exceptions of the design indicia 40, may be totally clear or partially clear or a tinted transparent material.

[0030] Although the sheet of material 16 has been shown and described herein as having a substantially square-shaped configuration, it should be

understood that the sheet of material 16 may assume any geometric, non-geometric, asymmetrical or fanciful shape having any appropriate size so long as the sheet of material 16 can be disposed about the floral grouping 12 to form the decorative cover 10 and so long as the card 17 can be secured to the decorative cover 10. For example, the sheet of material 16 may be rectangular in shape, circular in shape, heart-shaped or the like. Furthermore, it is not necessary that the sheet of material 16 and the card 17 be of the same or even similar shapes. For example, but not by way of limitation, the sheet of material 16 could be rectangular or square in shape and the card 17 could be circular in shape.

[0031] While the decorative cover 10 has been described as being formed of one sheet of material 16, it is to be understood that the decorative cover 10 can be formed of two or more sheets of material 16. In addition, when employing two or more sheets of material 16 to form the decorative cover 10 about the floral grouping 12, the configuration of the sheets of material 16 may vary depending upon the overall design desired for the decorative cover 10. For example, when using two sheets of material 16 to form the decorative cover 10, the sheets of material 16 can have the same configuration, such as a square-shaped configuration, or the two sheets of material 16 can have different configurations, such as a square-shaped configuration and a

rectangular-shaped configuration, and if desired, the two sheets of material 16 can be oriented differently relative to one another.

[0032] While certain embodiments of a decorative flower pot cover and a decorative cover for a floral grouping have been described in detail herein, it should be understood that changes may be made in the construction and operation of the various components and assemblies described herein and changes may be made in the steps or the sequence of steps of the methods described herein without departing from the spirit and the scope of the invention as defined in the following claims.